DIVERSE GLIMPSES OF THE MIMIC STAGE WORLD

said that they would be shipped back to Russia, but late this week uncertainty developed as to whether they would be sent out again on tour in an effort to break new ground elsewhere. Following their tepid reception in New York the cutting wind from Lake Michigan is understood to have blown them quickly away from Chicago.

After the close of "The Passing Show of 1922" the Winter Garden will be closed for rebuilding, which has nothing whatever to do, however, with the fact that George Hassell has been cavorting around there. It is possible that the core of the "Hitchy-Koo" show will be installeld there, remodeled with new silks and satins.

Theaters are becoming hard to obtain once more, and Broadway seems well sewed up for several more weeks. "Listening In," Carlyle Moore's production, is said to have made a hit when it was run through Atlantic City, Pittsburgh and Baltimore, but had to close in the latter city last week for lack of a metropolitan outlet. Leo Ditrichstein in "Under False Pretences" and William Hodge in "For All of Us" have also been marking time until the market here turns over. "Barnum Was Right," Louis F. Werba's new production, closed a week ago, and will be extensively rewritten and have a new cast chained up to it. Rehearsals will recommence this week, and it promises to stir up the dust in Manhattan around New Year's.

Another of the transactions in the brisk theatrical trading of last week was the sale by the Selwyns of Mme. Petrova's play "The White Peacock" to Melville Raymond, who had been thrusting the play through the West as business manager. The authoress-star, who came to New York personally to coax the deal through, is said to have come away with a piece of the play adhering to her fingers. Raymond plans to send it through the South at a $3 top—the play cleaned up at a $2.50 gait—and to circus it, turning on the red fire of publicity without limit.

Much of the dialogue has been squeezed out by which Mme. Petrova intended this for a Magna Charta of feminine rights. Following her tour in this she is said to be entertaining designs to try out another of her own works which has a title at which this typewriter balks. It has the proper ironic Petrovian touch.

One reason why Mme. Petrova is said to have dragged down a minimum of $10,000 a week in Illinois, Iowa and the middle West—playing to the unprecedented amounts of $2,000 nightly in Champaign and Peoria and doing $9,000 for three days in Des Moines—was the fact that the managers of the usual troupes out there are offering ghastly skeletons of plays and the theatergoing public are hungry for solid nourishment. Some of the brilliant dramas which have been offered to the middle Western intelligence have been "The Unloved Wife," which is of the same breed as "Bought and Paid For"; "The Painted Flapper" and "Why Wives Go Wrong."

The manager who presented the latter show tried to stir up a great scandal over it, though any one who was conversant with movie titles would know what to expect. He advertised a "special matinee for women only," packing the house, but they found the piece no more salacious than popcorn. The scenery used by these barnstorming troupes was generally of the shapeless, folding variety, tucked away in trunks, which they took out and tacked up in every new theater with a prayer that it wouldn't sag down on them.

Dorinda Adams, one of the beauties of the first "Music Box Revue," has been engaged to play in William A. Page's new play, "The Bootleggers," a new type of part—that of the chorus girl bootlegger, peddling hooch on Broadway for pin money. This is one of the unusual revelations of the nefarious traffic which William promises his play will make plain to all.

"Tons of Money" will never come to the Gaiety Theater, the English farce having been laid tenderly to rest elsewhere in this country. But, as Bruce Edwards says, "With 'Loyalties' there, Charles Dillingham has tons of money at the Gaiety, anyhow."

A strange and almost unaccountable case has just developed on Broadway, where a pair of field glasses had more power over a manager than a play. Capt. J. A. E. Malone, partner in the English firm of Grossmith & Malone and well known among London producers, came to this country to see the premiere of "The Bunch and Judy," but decided to fill in the time by seeing "The Fool," since he had quite a long period to wait before the opening at the Globe on November 27. He told William A. Page that if the play didn't take with him he would join Page at the Lambs Club around 9:30 P. M.

About that time he walked in on Page at the club.

"Hello," said the scourge of the bootleggers. "Didn't you like 'The Fool'?"

"No," said Capt. Malone. "I couldn't find my field glasses."

"Why," remarked Page without a moment's thought, "you don't need those to see the play with."

"But I lost them in the cab on the way to see Mrs. Malone off to San Francisco. I value them highly, because they were a souvenir of the great war, and I've spent all the time since then looking for them. In fact, I haven't seen 'The Fool' at all."

As soon as he has the Fay Bainter company feeding at New York's expense Manager William Harris, Jr., is expected to look into the chances for life of another acquisition. Booth Tarkington's "Cunnel Blake." He also has a play by John Galsworthy gasping for air.

William Anthony McGuire, author of "It's a Boy" and "Six Cylinder Love," is writing another play, which, it is reported, has neither children nor carburetors featured.

Charles Hopkins, who endeared himself to all hearts with his production of "Treasure Island," threatens to be in our midst as a producer again next season. The Punch and Judy Theater will again be his rallying point. Edward Goodman, who presented Galsworthy's "The Pigeon," also expects to put a date on a new production next fall.

Zoe Akins Has One Night In Turin

Whereupon James K. Hackett and Shakespeare Are Gone Over Thoroughly.

Zoe Akins, whose latest play, "The Texas Nightingale," opens on Monday at the Empire Theater, has been keeping a dramatic note book, of which this is an advance glimpse.

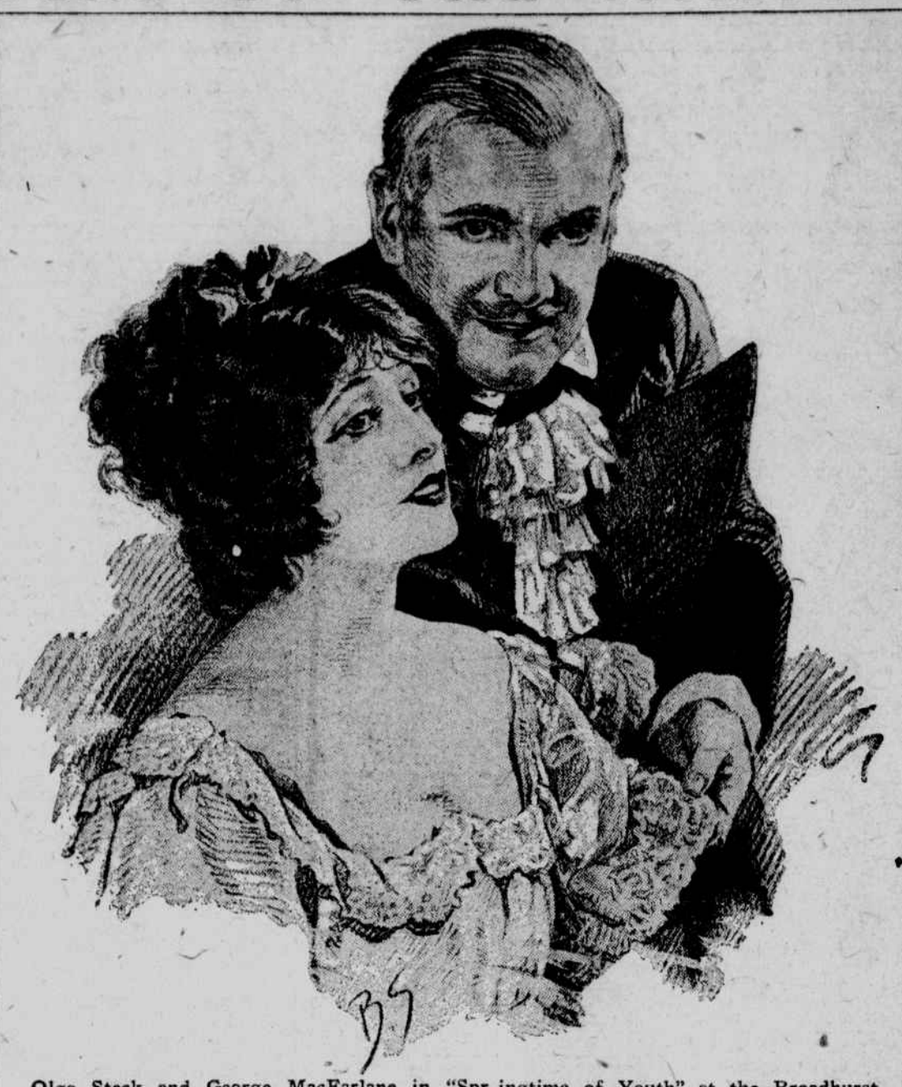
ONE NIGHT IN TURIN.

I have just come back from a performance of "Saul" at the Opera House. . . . They tell me that Duse was here a few weeks ago and stayed at this hotel. I wonder if she could have had this room. At any rate, I will pretend that she did. . . . And surely she must have had the same audience that I saw to-night. An audience as alive as a tree in a wind; very quick to hiss itself into attention; and big enough to fill the Metropolitan; and listening with severe pleasure to the bombast of a Biblical drama which I couldn't understand and didn't try to. It was simple and stately and, now and then, exciting, and delivered in those big colorful voices, with those swift big gestures, that never seem ridiculous except when assumed by American or English actors. Even so, they are sometimes very effective. No wonder they liked James K. in Paris. This Italian audience would have admired him, too. I felt ready to weep one day when he showed me his notices—from the London and Paris critics—and his decorations from the French Government, and told me something of his triumph over here. It's a very fine thing to venture upon a new road in a strange country, and Hackett turned his back upon his every day roles when he turned his back upon America and went to England to produce Shakespeare. I think his *Othello* is very fine—very impressive. I'm not sure how I should have liked his *Macbeth*, but St. John Ervine told me it was extraordinary. He said that Hackett was not only "every inch a man," so to speak, but also a great military figure. I can imagine it. . . . It seems to me there are two ways of "doing" Shakespeare—each equally thrilling. The obvious way, of course, is Hackett's way; as a recital—at a concert grand pitch—for music, for climaxes—of emotion an' tone, for pageantry, and tumult—such an attack conquers any audience that permits itself to be a natural audience; it conquers the audience sufficiently sophisticated to delight in the blare of the trumpets of great poetry—and to be aware that there is a place in literature sacred to the tales of gods and heroes; and it conquers, too, the simpler mind to whom the melodrama of such tales is sufficient cause for excitement. But Shakespeare is also an ideal "little theater" dramatist.

I should like to see "Macbeth" or "Hamlet" given at the Provincetown Theater, staged in some such fashion as "Emperor Jones," or "The Hairy Ape," which unfortunately, I've missed by being away. I think the swiftness of thought, the clear play of the intellectual processes, would "come over," fresh and keen, with a new amazing sense of intimacy, in such a production, a production in which the soul of *Macbeth* or the soul of *Juliet* almost whispers to the audience. For it is true that in our generation, we easily grow a little contemptuous of what is familiar to us—and we have all known the raging beauty of sound of the Shakespearean drama since the days of our youth. That is the only reason, I think, why a performance of *Othello* by Hackett is not so exciting as it should be—as the cinema performance, for instance, of Asti Nelson as *Hamlet*. I am sure that this performance of "Saul" by these Italian actors, if given at the Metropolitan Opera House, would have seemed a little ridiculous, but before an audience in a city as full of waving arms as the stage itself and as full of the swift sound of human voices racing to express the fluent energies of mind and emotion, it was only gravely beautiful, and beautifully earnest. One felt swept along. The passionate recitative—far away from the habits of expression common to our race (if Americans are a race) and even to our stage, never seemed awkward nor old fashioned. Most drama and most acting, it seems to me, must have its existence within the limitations of the race producing it. The American hard headedness, perfectly expressed in the Missouri slogan "Show me," builds a difficult wall between itself and illusion. I remember that I once saw Grasso, a very great actor, give a performance—magnificent in its scope and power—which excited the audience tremendously, and the prompter was always just ahead of him.

It was like a duet—in which the low sing-song from the prompter's box never ceased. Can one imagine an American audience's response in the face of such mechanics? But it is this very quality of "offishness" in our theatergoers that challenges the playright, the producer and the actor to do their best, I think. In France a favorite dramatist, a favorite actor, is like the child of fond parents. There is something of the expectant family circle in the attitude of all Latin audiences; I am told that the same thing is true in Russia; certainly I have seen it in the Yiddish theater in New York. But on Broadway! Nothing that one has ever done before helps one when the curtain goes up on a "first night." But this very lack of reverence—this quickness to see the holes in the fabric of illusion is making our theater the most effective in the world. . . . And yet—I have gone to a great many plays with people who do not care as much as I do either for the American theater or the theater at all, . . . and I've apologized repeatedly for many things: for the miserable diction, the ignorance of proper voice production, the provincial walk and gesturing, for instance, of many of the young people on our stage and many not so young. A maid and her mistress will walk in the same play with exactly the same loose swing of the shoulders and the hips. . . . The English butler rolls his r's, . . . and then the terrible embarrassment of the more serious moments! But of all the difficulties I have had personally with the undisciplined American actor the worst has been his inability to read lines accurately. Our playrights and directors have tolerated a slovenness of memory—an unpardonable inaccuracy of speech—that would destroy the literary style of Shaw or Shakespeare.

In my next play, which will probably be my prima donna play, I shall insist upon absolute accuracy. Fremstad is always talking about the "trickiness" of the English language. And it's true. "But, my dear," is a very different thing from "But, dear." "It would be rather fun for us to go back to Texas together. . . . wouldn't it? . . ." cannot be expressed with the same significance, diffidence, with the words or phrases juggled or changed. In this prima donna play I've tried to see how far I can travel on the choice of the right words alone. It's a play which is a delicate combination of many elements. There's vulgarity of expression—the natural vulgarity of sheer exaggeration in the prima donna. She's like one of those women made for the stage. At close range their pose, their voices, even their features seem rather awful, but on the stage in their true perspective they take on greatness. . . . I hope the rough humor, the terrific vitality, the physical grandeur are accented in the performance; not the romance. The romance will take care of itself. We'll have to find an excellent actor for Tillerton. Some one very different from Jobyna. And Raymond. I'm appalled when I think of that difficulty. Jobyna may be right about Percy Helton. Willa Cather said it when she said "a young Arnold Daly" . . . If Jobyna is just triumphant, loud, ruthless, splendid, impulsive, she'll be wonderful. The comedy will take care of [illegible] too. She mustn't be down—low [illegible], she's a Texas hollyhawk, a Texas nightingale, and she's like the champion pugilist of operatic art with a big A. I'm sure that the more sophisticated people are the more they will like her. I wish she'd seen "Saul" to-night. That's the way she ought to be in my play—all over the place. Dominant. Ludicrous. And yet—a great singer, a great woman. Big gestures. Booming voice.



Olga Steck and George MacFarlane in "Spr ingtime of Youth" at the Broadhurst.

The First Nighter's Calendar

MONDAY.

EMPIRE THEATER—"The Texas Nightingale," a comedy by Zoe Akins, will be presented by Charles Frohman, Inc. Jobyna Howland will be featured, with Cyril Keightley heading the supporting cast, which includes Perce Helton, Perce Benton, Georges Renavent and Beth Varden.

GARRICK THEATER.—"The Lucky One," a comedy by A. A. Milne, will be produced by the Theater Guild. In the cast are Violet Heming, Denis King, Percy Waram, Helen Westley, Harry Ashford, Romney Brent and Grace Elliston. The production was directed by Komisarjevsky.

The Passing Shows

Play.	Theater.	Presented.
Kiki	Belasco	Nov. 29, '21
Chauve Souris	Century Roof	Feb. 4 '22
The Cat and the Canary	National	Feb. 7
Partners Again	Selwyn	May 1
Abie's Irish Rose	Republic	May 28
Ziegfeld's Follies of 1922	New Amsterdam	June 5
Whispering Wires	Forty-ninth Street	Aug. 7
Blossom Time (2d engmt.)	Century	Aug. 7
Shore Leave	Lyceum	Aug 8
The Old Soak	Plymouth	Aug. 22
The Gingham Girl	Earl Carroll	Aug. 28
The Torch Bearers	Vanderbilt	Aug. 29
So This Is London	Hudson	Aug. 30
Molly Darling	Globe	Sept. 1
Better Times	Hippodrome	Sept. 2
Sally, Irene and Mary	Casino	Sept. 4
A Fantastic Fricassee	Greenwich Village	Sept. 11
Why Men Leave Home	Morosco	Sept. 11
Greenwich Village Follies	Shubert	Sept. 12
The Awful Truth	Henry Miller's	Sept. 18
Orange Blossoms	Fulton	Sept. 19
Bandbo	Ritz	Sept. 20
Passing Show of 1922	Winter Garden	Sept 20
East of Suez	Eltinge	Sept. 21
Spite Corner	Little	Sept. 25
On the Stairs	Daly's	Sept. 25
Rose Bernd	Longacre	Sept. 26
Loyalties	Gaiety	Sept. 27
Thin Ice	Belmont	Sept. 30
The Yankee Princess	Knickerbocker	Oct. 2
The Lady in Ermine	Ambassador	Oct. 2
R. U. R.	Frazee	Oct. 9
To Love	Bijou	Oct. 17
Music Box Revue	Music Box	Oct 23
The Fool	Times Square	Oct. 23
The Last Warning	Klaw	Oct. 24
Springtime of Youth	Broadhurst	Oct. 26
Seventh Heaven	Booth	Oct. 30
Six Characters in Search of an Author	Princess	Oct. 30
The World We Live In	Jolson Fifty-ninth Street	Oct. 31
Up She Goes	Playhouse	Nov. 6
The Forty-niners	Punch and Judy	Nov. 7
Rain	Maxine Elliott's	Nov. 7
Crowns	Provincetown	Nov. 11
Sorel and French Players	Thirty-ninth Street	Nov. 13
Hospitality	Forty-eighth Street	Nov. 13
Merton of the Movies	Cort	Nov. 13
Little Nellie Kelly	Liberty	Nov. 13
The Love Child	George M. Cohan	Nov. 14
The Romantic Age	Comedy	Nov 14
Hamlet	Sam H. Harris	Nov. 16
Virtue	Nora Bayes	Nov. 16

Tales of the Two-a-Day

Every current fad and fashion in the legitimate theater has an aftermath in vaudeville where the substance of the new entertainment is served in capsule form. The Russian fever has reached the two-a-day, and half a dozen elaborate Russian acts are touring the country in Keith vaudeville and meeting with a cordial reception. "Yarmark" is the most elaborate and presents a fete day at an annual fair with the young people going in for song, dance and general cutting up. Some gifted Russian actors and actresses are in the cast of twenty, as the producer found scores of applicants with good records in the Russian theater begging for an opportunity to appear in an entertainment which did not require English. Clever as the average Russian is in acquiring languages there are a great number of refugees in New York who have no English and are unable to profit by real talent for the stage. At any rate this situation made it possible to get together a good company. A pupil of Leon Bakst painted the scenery and a one time costumer to the Imperial Russian Ballet designed the costumes. Another popular act called "Katushka" is a Russian dancing feature without song or comedy. Both of these acts have a spokesman who "does a Baileff ballyhoo." There is under way a feature which will present several of the more picturesque of the Diaghileff ballets.

The National Vaudeville Artists includes a post of the American Legion made up entirely of two-a-day men who went to war. They are a crack post but differ from all others in the fact that when they parade and there is applause many of the actor veterans halt to take a bow.

The Mandels at the Palace maintain that they were the first acrobats to use individual handkerchiefs. The epochal innovation in ground, high and lofty tumbling took place on the stage of the E. F. Albee Theater, Providence, at a matinee performance some years ago.

When the Duncan Sisters first visited London they were given a list of the best shops but on visiting them were halted on seeing the sign, "By appointment." They wrote several times for appointments before being informed that this referred to royal appointments. The Duncans are at the Palace in high spirits and having the time of their lives with new material. Thomas Burke of "Limehouse Nights" told them that they were the incarnation of his Twinkletoes and they are striving to live right up to that ideal.

It is understood that the Shuberts plan to weed out anything that looks like dead wood hereafter and adopt a mixed policy. Whenever a good unit revue comes along in the natural course of booking events that show will be run at the house. If none such turn up, straight vaudeville will be offered. This will be quite a departure from steady revues, headed by some star.

Due to the difficulties over billing that would be satisfactory to all concerned on the electric sign in front of the Central Theater, it is likely that all names will be discarded in future, and the marquees will bear simply the strip, "Shubert Vaudeville." Thus closes another eventful episode in the history of variety.

The Shuberts have been drawing so heavily on the chorus girl market for the coryphees in their vaudeville shows, that now they find quite a scarcity of suitable young women of the ensemble. However, it is not known what can be done about it.

Vaudeville

CENTRAL—"Stolen Sweets," with Fanny and Kitty Watson, Harry Steppe and Harry O'Neill.
PALACE—Lou Tellegen, the Duncan Sisters, Joe Cook.
RIVERSIDE—Fanny Brice, Tom Bryan and Lillian Broderick.
EIGHTY-FIRST STREET—"Boola Boola," Wallace Reid, Agnes Ayres and May McAvoy in the photoplay "Clarence."
LOEW'S STATE—Harry Adler and Rose Dunbar, Viola Dana in the photoplay "Love in the Dark."
PROCTOR'S FIFTH AVENUE—John Davidson and company, Clara Howard.
PROCTOR'S TWENTY-THIRD STREET—California Ramblers, Polly and Oz.
PROCTOR'S FIFTY-EIGHTH STREET—"The Ring Tangle," Willie Solar.
PROCTOR'S 125TH STREET—Ernest R. Ball, Black and O'Donnell.

Two Davids Have Their Way With 'The Merchant of Venice'

Comments by a Reviewer Showing the Effect of the Belasco-Warfield Production on Baltimore.

In the matter of David Belasco's presentation of David Warfield in "The Merchant of Venice," which opened at Baltimore last week, Robert Garland finds the production mainly interesting as a spectacle. His comment follows:

You recall the man who didn't care for the plays of Shakespeare because they contained so many quotations.

This benighted gentleman was certainly not among those present last night at Ford's, where, after no little preliminary red fire and newspaper hullabaloo, David Belasco's production of "The Merchant of Venice" was shown for the first time on any stage. So sacred was the atmosphere within our Fayette Street Opera House, so surcharged with importance, that a visitor from Mars would have thought that the story of the suffragette and the Jew was undergoing its world premiere.

This visiting Martian would have felt quite certain that David Warfield's too sympathetic *Shylock* was the first projection of Shakespeare's unhappy Hebrew, that Miss Mary Servoss's rather studied *Portia* was the initial visualization of that talkative and pedantic female. From beginning to end the occasion was just too notable for anything, an event quite solemn and holy enough to give any critic pause. It was almost like a revival of the creation with the original cast.

Be this as it may, there are two ways of approaching a play by William Shakespeare, just as there are two ways of approaching a production by David Belasco. Considerable hokum is current about each of these well known gentlemen. Shakespeare—or Belasco—can be approached on bended knee, with a candle in one hand and a prayer book in the other. Or he can be approached as one human being approaches another, with fairness, common sense and an attempt at mutual understanding.

Shakespeare was a great poet who wrote some extremely good plays and some plays not so good. He wrote "Hamlet," one of the greatest of tragedies. He wrote "Coriolanus," which is terrible. And he wrote "The Merchant of Venice," which comes somewhere in between. Mr. Belasco, on the other hand, is a skillful and somewhat old fashioned producing manager who is prone to take himself over seriously. Although we have him to thank for "The Easiest Way," we shall never forgive him for "Dark Rosaleen."

If Mr. Belasco ever had cause to take himself seriously, now is the time.

"The Merchant of Venice" is a spectacle such as we have seldom seen. Never has the famous impresario's vast knowledge of the craftmanship of the theater served him to more pictorial and effective ends. Never—not even in the halycon days of "The Darling of the Gods" and "Du Barry"—has Mr. Belasco's sheer artistry had a more colorful canvas to spread itself upon. And, despite a not infrequent self-conscious artificiality—in the second scene of the second act, for instance—his long and arduous training has served him well.

Pictorially, the current production of "The Merchant of Venice" is unsurpassed. The streets of Venice have height and breadth and thickness; you feel, somehow, that the Rialto is just around the bend. In the rich and unreal chamber of Portia, in the open place outside the synagogue, before the house of *Shylock* where the dusk is darkening into night, in the court of justice and in the garden of Belmont, where that lovely last act occurs, the pristine lavishness of Belasco comes into its own again.

Only once does it fail him. *Portia's* casket chamber seems makeshift and insecure, more like the interior of the New York Casino than Belmont's costliest room.

Mr. Warfield, in studying his *Shylock*, seems to have heeded a certain William Hazlitt.

You will find a strong quick and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The constant apprehension of being burned alive, plundered, banished, reviled and trampled on might be supposed to sour the most forbearing nature and to take something from that milk of human kindness with which his persecutors contemplated his indignities. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong.

If David Warfield's *Shylock* suffers from anything, it suffers from a too great humanization. Last night you felt more than once that your old friend "The Music Master" was giving a performance of Shakespeare's Jew to make a Belasco holiday. Walter Hampden's *Shylock*, the most vivid we have ever seen, is hard, brittle and unflaggingly vindictive. But the *Shylock* of Mr. Warfield is no more than a much put upon Jew, stung to madness by repeated and undeserved provocations.

His daughter and his reason depart simultaneously, *Jessica* gone, no ferociousness is too ferocious for him. But it is insanity rather than innate malignancy.

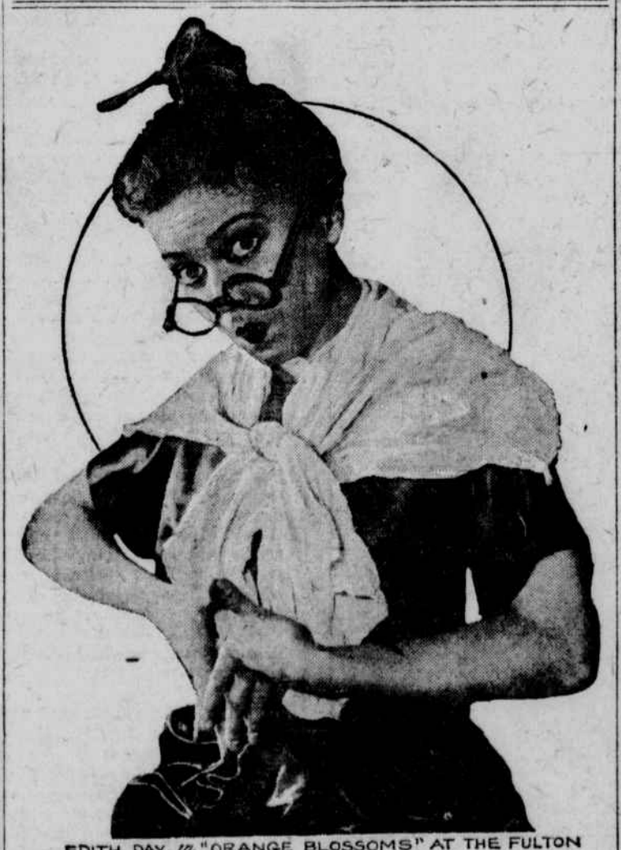
We agree with Hazlitt when he says that *Portia* is not a very great favorite with him. Mary Servoss did not make Shakespeare's heroine any more likable.

There has always been a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, an affectation and pedantry quite unusual in Shakespeare's women, but which Miss Servoss's rather stereotyped performance did little to alleviate. However, she wore some of the most beautiful and costly fabrics we have ever laid eyes upon. Her trial episode was carried off in the customary manner. We liked Mr. Warfield's new leading lady best in her opening and closing scenes.

A. E. Anson made an impressive *Duke of Venice*. With Hazlitt, we object entirely to the Black Prince of Morocco, and Herbert Grimwood did nothing to change our mind. Ian MacLaren did his best with *Antonio*, a thankless role if ever there was one. Philip Merivale sounded like *Bassanio* and looked like something altogether different. Walter I. Percival as *Gratiano* was more sixteenth century than anybody else.

The lines belonging to *Antonio's* other friends were spoken by Horace Braham, Herbert Ranson and Reginald Goode.

When all is said and done Mr. Belasco's production of "The Merchant of Venice" is likely to be remembered longest as a spectacle. As the woman in front of us remarked: "It's a good old play even if it is by Shakespeare." As displayed currently at Ford's it looks like a million dollars. If it sounds like considerably less than that the fault is certainly not to be laid at the door of that David whose last name is Belasco.



EDITH DAY in "ORANGE BLOSSOMS" AT THE FULTON THEATER.

MY DEAR SIR:

THE HEART OF THE ROAD.

To the Dramatic Editor:

Recently I saw William Hodges's new play, called "For All of Us." I have discussed this with several of my friends here in the province—one of them a banker, with most bankerish sense. All of us agree that this play is not only wonderful entertainment but will do all of us a great deal of good.

I fear that when it hits New York its sweetness will be the cause of caustic comment by you cynical critics, and yet I hope that you will have your rosy glasses on when you go to look it over and will tell the world that "it's a darn good play."

INCONSTANT READER.

BUFFALO, November 13.

FROM EARL CARROLL.

To the Dramatic Editor:

I disagree with Henry Hull as to the cause of the falling off of patronage in theater galleries. It is not the fault of the so-called "suppressed emotion" or "restrained acting." The architects have quit building galleries.

EARL CARROLL.

NEW YORK, November 15.